

First Footsteps Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Elizabeth Margaret Grocott

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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Description of the setting

First Footsteps was registered in 2002 and owned and managed privately as part of a chain of four nurseries. It operates from a converted house in the Anfield area of Liverpool. All children share access to a secure outside play area. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am until 6pm all year round.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 63 children on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aged from birth to four years. The setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities, and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff who work with children of whom all have relevant early years qualifications. Additional staff are employed for cooking and cleaning the premises. The setting receives support from the local authority and an advisory teacher.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, safe and secure and make good progress in their learning and development, although there some minor weaknesses with regard to observational assessments. Staff work very effectively with children and their families to create a fully inclusive environment, where each child's needs, preferences and learning styles are known, respected and met. Parents are made to feel welcome and encouraged to be involved in their child's learning, by meeting with staff to discuss progress regularly and receiving ideas of how they can help their child at home. Although most foods are healthy and nutritious, there are still some processed foods on the menu. The management use the Ofsted self-evaluation to reflect on their practice and identify areas for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- devise a system to ensure observation across all the six areas of learning regularly supports continuous assessment to form a view of where each child is in their learning
- improve meals and snacks to ensure that they are healthy, balanced and nutritious at all times by reducing the amount of processed food served, and increasing the amount of fresh produce in line with the government's healthy eating agenda.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has robust recruitment procedures in place to check practitioners initial and ongoing suitability to work with children and to ensure they know their responsibilities. Children are well safeguarded as all adults undergo rigorous checks including those done by the Criminal Records Bureau. Staff are alert to possible indicators of abuse or neglect and are confident in the procedure to follow should they be concerned about a child. This means children are kept safe. The child protection coordinator has received training in safeguarding. A thorough risk assessment of all areas has been made to identify possible hazards and staff have taken steps to minimise these. They make risk assessments before children are taken on outings to ensure their safety during the trip. Children are regularly encouraged to practise evacuation procedures, in order to learn about keeping themselves safe. Documentation is well maintained and organised effectively to support children's needs and the efficient running of the nursery.

Management provide consistent support to all staff throughout the nursery. They regularly review all aspects of the nursery and have identified plans to develop some aspects of the service. For example, the outdoor play area, using the local community and engaging with parents. This demonstrates their ability to continuously improve. They have addressed the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection and this has had a positive impact on the outcomes for children. Learning and development has been a priority in their in-house training and the systems in place ensure all children are making as much progress as they can across the six learning areas. Staff are encouraged to access training courses to develop their knowledge and skills which in turn improve outcomes for children. These include first aid, health and safety, the outdoor environment and inclusion. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. They are provided with opportunities to use their home language during their play and staff learn key words and phrases to enable them to communicate effectively and to ease the transition from home to nursery. Children see print displayed in different languages, helping to raise their awareness of diversity and acceptance and understanding of others.

Staff have developed good relationships with parents and have ongoing communication with others who also provide EYFS. Parents are regularly kept up-to-date about activities and their children's learning via a monthly newsletter. Parents say they are well informed about the provision and are able to share quality information about their children's care needs. They welcome the planning and assessment procedures and feel they are easy to follow and make clear the progress their children are making. They particularly like the range of policies and procedures they receive, the fact that staff get to know their children well, the time given to speak to staff and the very well organised nursery.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Staff have a good understanding of the EYFS and how children learn best. They work closely with children as individuals and in small groups, observing and recording what each child does and achieves. As they plan individually for children they ensure that achievements are individually tailored to meet need. They follow a loose theme which allows children to follow their own interests within this. Staff make six weekly assessments which are shared with parents, before being used to plan again for children's next steps. Although staff make observations regularly, there is no system in place to ensure that each of the six areas is being monitored, meaning there may be some gaps in learning. Effective use of the key person system ensures children are able to form appropriate attachments and provides parents with a focal point for information sharing.

The nursery environment enables children to become active, independent learners. They confidently select their own activities, make decisions about how to use resources and contribute their own ideas in discussions. For example, at circle time, older more able children discuss feelings, describing how they feel today and why. Other children speculate as to why the child feels that way with some humorous outcomes. The rooms are bright with large windows, allowing children to study all that happens outside. Children's artwork and photographs are attractively displayed around the walls giving them a sense of belonging and pride. Children enjoy a variety of activities including sensory play with squirty cream, coloured water and papier-mâché. They use their imagination when they make dens outside and are encouraged to make props for favourite stories, for example, a telescope. They explore with torches and mirrors as they investigate science and test their memory when they play card games. Their maths skills are enhanced as they use number and shape in everyday routines, such as counting the number of apple slices on the plate at snack time. Children have regular opportunities to make marks as there are writing implements provided in most play areas. Younger children develop pre writing skills as they make marks during messy play.

Outdoors children have access to resources which promote their upper body strength and give opportunities for active play and exploration. They plant and dig in the growing area, experiment with floating and sinking and search the soil for bugs to study with magnifying glasses. There is a construction area with plastic crates which can become anything children wish to build. Children regularly use computers to develop their knowledge and skills and have access to a range of books as well as musical instruments.

Children benefit from a safe, secure environment, which is carefully planned to provide rich, stimulating learning experiences. Staff provide clear boundaries and have consistent, age-appropriate expectations meaning children behave well. Children have a good understanding of hygiene practices and the reasons for them as they wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. They can help themselves to drinks throughout the day when they feel thirsty with staff ensuring younger, less able children are well provided for. Children develop an understanding of health and nutrition as they are encouraged to eat freshly

cooked, generally healthy meals and snacks. These include chicken casserole, chilli beef with rice and pasta carbonara. They enjoy fresh fruit regularly. However, processed foods provided, such as hot dogs, fish fingers do not give children consistent messages about healthy eating. All children have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise to promote their health.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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